



**UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF**

To the Soldiers and Army Civilians of Army Aviation:

Since our community was formally established in 1983, we have served as a model of safety across the force. Rigorous training, maintenance and currency standards keep aviators at the forefront of all Army operations across the globe. As the Army's senior aviator, I know too well the risk inherent to our profession and the measures we take to mitigate them daily.

The past five years have shown that we are approaching the most dangerous time of year, with August being the worst month. While flying hours remain the same during this time, accidents and deaths increase exponentially. We can and must do better.

This sustained pattern is alarming, but we have time to address potential issues now if we observe the following call to action:

- **Manage Transitions:** Risk increases significantly during transitions, whether it is between operations or leaders. During the summer PCS season in particular, changes in key personnel invite some hazards to slip through the cracks during handover. Identify who is most qualified for risk approval and as risk acceptance authority in your transition plans.
- **Understand the Environment:** Aircraft performance and the visual environment degrades with increasing heat. All members of the aviation team, from maintainers to crew chiefs to pilots to commanders, must be aware of the effects of weather on aircraft and personnel and adjust flight schedules accordingly.
- **Manage Crew Mix:** Similar to the challenges with transitions, personnel flux can create issues with crew selection. Leaders at all levels must holistically assess their aviators, regardless of time on station, and conduct a thorough assessment of their abilities and challenges to ensure appropriate crew selection based on the complexity of the mission and operational environment.
- **Be Present as Leaders:** Ensure the right leaders are present in all phases of operations – planning, rehearsals, and execution. Mission success depends upon leaders deciding how best to mitigate risk and authorize mission briefing officers and approval authorities.

I am confident Army Aviation will remain Above the Best. Continue to take care of your people, and always do the right thing the right way. Thank you for all that you do.

People First — Winning Matters — Army Strong!

FLY SAFE!


James C. McConville
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